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President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 156

Towards a culture of peace

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/292)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.4)

The President: The note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has been issued as document A/52/292.

I give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.4.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I have the honour to address this gathering on agenda item 156, entitled "Towards a culture of peace", which is being considered for the first time as a separate item by the General Assembly.

Bangladesh, along with Argentina, Bhutan, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Côte d Ivoire, Djibouti, El Salvador, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Panama, the Philippines, Senegal, Turkmenistan and Venezuela made a request for the inclusion of a separate item on this all-important issue. This request is contained in document A/52/191. The General Committee, as well as the plenary, decided by consensus to include this item for consideration in plenary meeting.

As we enter a new millennium, we are faced with the challenges and vast potential of an interdependent world. The world of today is essentially a global family, based on the gains of interdependence and interaction, and on a wide exchange of ideas, culture, resources, technology and information. It is in this context that a culture of peace, as opposed to a culture of violence or war, gains relevance.

Although it is an evolving concept, the culture of peace is rooted in our culture of social interaction and sharing, tolerance and respect for human rights, the foundations of democracy and freedom and our common quest for peaceful coexistence. As we struggle to address a multitude of problems that transcend borders, a culture of peace and harmony, as opposed to war, violence and conflict could provide the foundation for a meaningful alliance for global action.

The creation of the United Nations itself was a major step towards a transformation from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and non-violence. Since then, the principles of a culture of peace have been evolving over the years through important instruments and programmes. It has also been reflected as an important and cross-cutting concept in the outcome of major international conferences held in recent years. The concept, as elaborated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is

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already being promoted actively at many levels and in many countries. It is gradually evolving as a global movement. The promotion of the concept at the national level, in every society, to forge better understanding and harmony among various groups, and at the bilateral, regional and international levels, will only serve to complement existing efforts and programmes with similar objectives. Similarly, we believe, actions to promote a culture of peace by the United Nations system could also be complementary to other United Nations efforts, including peacekeeping, disarmament, development, human rights and the advancement of women.

In advocating our support for developing and promoting a culture of peace, we see it essentially as a process of transformation and institutional development to be based on the particular socio-economic and cultural context of individual societies and institutions. We would also like to emphasize the linkage between peace and development and the need for a culture of peace that would be closely linked to the goal of international cooperation and sustainable human development.

The task of developing a culture of peace would require comprehensive educational, cultural, social and civic action based on a commonality of interest and shared goals. Peace is not merely the absence of war and conflict. It should be construed as a positive, dynamic, participatory process linked intrinsically to democracy, justice and development by which differences are respected, dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are transformed into cooperation. Therefore, in promoting a culture of peace as a global movement, alliances would have to be established among various intergovernmental and governmental organizations, as well as with all other actors of civil society.

The report of the Director-General of UNESCO, as transmitted by the Secretary-General in document A/52/292, provides a comprehensive picture on the development of the concept and of the various activities being undertaken for the promotion of a culture of peace. We thank him for providing the elements for a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace, which we believe provide a useful basis for elaborating a draft declaration and programme of action.

The draft resolution on this item (A/52/L.4) is a procedural text requesting the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director-General of UNESCO and taking into account the views of Member States, to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, in 1998, a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace. Once the draft is available, the intergovernmental process for examining it for adoption would naturally commence. As the Assembly is aware, the Economic and Social Council has recommended that the General Assembly proclaim the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The adoption of the draft declaration and programme of action by the Assembly in the preceding year, that is in 1999, would, we believe, provide the necessary impetus to observe the year in an appropriate manner.

As we see it, a culture of peace is about non-violence and respect for human rights. It is about respect and solidarity among all peoples and dialogue between cultures. It is the linkage of peace to democratic participation and the right to development. It is about equality between men and women. Let us all resolve as members of this global family to chart a new course for a culture of peace.

With the permission of the Assembly, I should now like to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.4 entitled "Towards a culture of peace". In addition to the sponsors listed in the document, Algeria, Argentina, Bhutan, Bolivia, Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Turkmenistan have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, bringing the total number of sponsors to 37.

The concept of a culture of peace is based on the fundamental belief that saving future generations from the scourge of war would require a transformation from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace.

The draft resolution takes note of the report of the Director-General of UNESCO, contained in document A/52/292, which outlines the elements for a draft provisional declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace. The Secretary-General is requested to submit a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace, in coordination with the Director-General of UNESCO and taking into account the views to be expressed by Member States during the debate on the item, to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. The draft also decides to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session the item entitled "Culture of peace".

It is basically a procedural resolution and I hope it will be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Decerega Smith (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Panama has co-sponsored draft resolution A/52/L.4, thus reiterating our support for the ideas and purposes that are the basis for the UNESCO initiative with which the United Nations began to associate itself through resolutions 51/101 and 50/173.

Since the wise opinion that wars begin in the minds of men was incorporated in the Constitution of UNESCO in 1946, reality has shown that eradicating war and replacing it with peace is a long-term task which presupposes commitment on the part of the international community.

Humankind has been accumulating knowledge and awareness of the problems that cause wars to erupt. In this accumulation of information and thought, UNESCO has a recognized mission and a mandate to combat ignorance and to promote progress in education, science, culture and communications, which are pillars in the construction of the individual and of developed societies.

Since 1989, in the waning of the cold war, the concept of a culture for peace began to occupy an important place in the intellectual efforts and the operational activities of UNESCO. In discussing this concept, the General Assembly is aware that the culture of peace has already been the subject of pioneer projects that UNESCO has carried out successfully in many countries.

My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General and to the Director-General of UNESCO for having enlightened us on the origins and development of the concept by means of document A/52/292. These documents clearly explain that the transdisciplinary project entitled "Towards a culture of peace" will be reorganized and strengthened on the basis of the guidelines of the governing bodies of UNESCO but that the objectives and goals of the project can be achieved only under United Nations leadership.

My delegation believes that at this session the General Assembly should accept that leadership, and this is why we supported the decision taken by the Economic and Social Council in July 1997 proclaiming the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. In addition we have noted with interest the appeal made by the Nobel Peace Prize laureates for the dedication of a decade to the culture of non-violence, from the year 2000 to the year 2010.

The texts — a preliminary draft declaration on a culture of peace and a preliminary draft for a programme of action on the same subject — have, in my delegation's view, a number of merits. To elaborate on these merits at this plenary meeting would mean undertaking an analysis of the above-mentioned texts. With a view to brevity, we will merely say that both texts contain themes that coincide with the commitments undertaken by Member States of the United Nations in the main conferences held since 1992.

It should be pointed out that these texts coincide with the declarations and plans of action adopted in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Copenhagen and Beijing. But my delegation feels it should also point out that, in our opinion, these texts also have an additional spiritual element, in that by allying peace with culture, they authorize the United Nations to bring about the required synthesis of the spiritual and material goals of human beings.

The project "Towards a culture of peace" should remain on the agenda of the United Nations as part of a necessary process in which the political, in all its dimensions, and the ethical, with all its demands, are both considered in discussions and the decision-making process at the United Nations.

Through the project, "Towards a culture of peace", the United Nations will be turning the scientific assertion that human beings are not genetically programmed for war into an ethical affirmation concerning the transcendental destiny of humankind, a destiny that the United Nations is committed to ensuring can be enjoyed in freedom, mutual understanding, participation and solidarity.

The delegation of Panama fully endorses the statement to be made by the delegation of El Salvador on behalf of the countries of the Central American isthmus and the delegation of Paraguay on behalf of the Rio Group.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): After the Second World War the United Nations was entrusted with the task of saving future generations from the scourge of war. The Organization has carried out this fundamental responsibility to the best of its ability, and with considerable success. With the end of the cold war, this task has taken on added complexity, requiring a new approach with a long-term perspective to achieve its original objective.

Contrary to a widespread perception, the end of the cold war brings forth uncertainties for the twenty-first

century, as the post-cold-war events have eloquently attested. A low threshold of tolerance among ethnic groups and cultures created climates of growing mistrust and heightened tensions within nations. As a result, we witnessed tragic outbreaks of violence and armed conflicts in various parts of the world after the end of the cold war, leading to the loss of thousands of innocent lives. Some parts of the world still threaten to be consumed again by such outbreaks if we let down our guard. This clearly reveals that more than the mere prevention of outbreaks of violence and armed conflicts is needed to save posterity from the scourge of war. As rightly pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, this task requires

> "transforming not only institutional structures and manifestations of war, but also its deep cultural roots, the culture of violence and war, into a culture of peace." [A/52/292, para. 2]

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has played a very significant role in promoting a culture of peace, a concept which emerged from the International Congress on "Peace in the minds of men" celebrated in Côte d'Ivoire in July 1989. UNESCO established the Culture of Peace Programme in 1993, and at its Twenty-eighth General Conference it declared that the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace was the greatest challenge for the world at the end of this century. Since then, UNESCO has been undertaking numerous activities at many levels under its transdisciplinary project "Towards a culture of peace". In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of UNESCO and thank the Secretary-General and the Director-General of UNESCO for providing us with a useful account of the work of UNESCO carried out within its efforts to promote a culture of peace. We also welcome the attempts of UNESCO to provide us, in accordance with resolution 51/101, with the elements for a draft declaration and a draft programme of action on a culture of peace. We find these elements to be very interesting and well thought out.

As observed in the report of the Secretary-General, a culture of peace is a process that grows out of the beliefs and actions of people themselves, and it develops in each country within its specific historical, socio-cultural and economic context. We share this view, based on our practical experience in the restoration of peace to the country. It must, however, be stressed here that historical, socio-cultural and economic contexts are not mere passive conditions for the development of a culture of peace. They are determinants of the process. Making the process a success presupposes a thorough understanding of them and removal of the old attitudes conditioned and forged by particular contexts and conditions. Myanmar's national experience in this respect provides an insight into the task of peace-building.

As a country that had been beset with insurgency problems throughout its post-independence history, Myanmar is fully aware of the political and socio-economic implications of national peace-building, its delicate nature and the pitfalls down the road. Myanmar's first brush with the insurgency problem began immediately after its independence from the British Government, and it had very soon grown into a sizeable national problem, taking a heavy toll on national development endeavours. Border areas of the country lagged behind other areas of the country in all fields, primarily due to the insurgency problem. Mistrust ran deep among the national races. Although serious attempts were made by previous Myanmar Governments to engage the insurgent groups in peace negotiations, peace was frustratingly elusive for the country.

Undeterred by the setbacks of the previous Governments in peace efforts, the State Law and Order Restoration Council took new peace initiatives based on a different approach when it assumed State responsibilities in 1988. In a departure from previous approaches, the new approach emphasized the development of the border areas where insurgency once reigned supreme. Under the new approach, the Government launched development projects for those areas and addressed the basic needs of their populace. Furthermore, the national races in areas concerned were provided with an opportunity to take part in these efforts. The Government's sincere efforts for and genuine concerns about the interest of the national races won understanding, trust and cooperation from them. Mistrust was replaced with positive attitudes, and this forged an atmosphere in which erstwhile foes have now become partners for development. The new approach has achieved unprecedented results. At present, 16 out of 17 armed groups are in the legal fold and they are engaged in the development tasks of their respective areas. This has led to a pervasive peace which Myanmar has never enjoyed in its modern history.

An imposed peace is a fragile peace. In constructing peace in Myanmar, the Government did not resort to force of arms. It reached out to the hearts and minds of the national races who were excluded in the past from national endeavours and consequently left marginalized in

their own country. The Government addressed their problems in good faith. We are confident that the peace we now enjoy, constructed through cooperation and understanding, will continue to prevail in the entire country and will have positive effects on the region.

Myanmar recognizes that promotion of a culture of peace is not confined to one country or one region. It has to be a global effort. Nevertheless, we are of the view that, first and foremost, it is essential to firmly establish a culture of peace at the national level. Failure or success in our national efforts will determine whether we will succeed at the global level. For this reason, we wish to underscore that it is necessary for the international community to show solidarity with the efforts of national Governments for peace-building.

We are now faced with the daunting task of building a culture of peace for the next century. As is widely recognized, it is a comprehensive and long-term process. However, since various activities for the promotion of a culture of peace are being undertaken at so many levels and in so many regions, we are convinced that the process is moving in the right direction and hope that it will meet with success.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed this morning at 11 a.m.

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe themselves on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. Bune (Fiji): Fiji is among the co-sponsors of the draft resolution before us and wishes to express its strong support for this document. The draft notes, *inter alia,* that the report by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) indicates that the transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace has been taken up as a priority by UNESCO and is also being promoted at many levels by the United Nations system as it enters the twenty-first century. The draft also requests the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director-General of UNESCO, to submit a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. The distinguished Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Ambassador Rahman, has introduced the draft resolution in the most clear and eloquent manner. We are especially grateful to him, and confident that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The report of UNESCO transmitted by the Secretary-General in document A/52/292, submitted pursuant to last year's resolution 51/101, provides an important and useful framework for our deliberations in this Assembly.

Permanent and lasting peace in our world has been the dream and ardent desire of every nation and succeeding generations. Permanent and lasting peace is the very foundation of friendly and constructive bilateral and international relations. It is the pillar for progress and development of nation States.

My country, Fiji, is fully committed to permanent and lasting peace in our world, and we have provided tangible evidence of that commitment in our full and active participation in almost every international peacekeeping operation of the United Nations. Several of our brave peacekeepers have died in and for the cause of peace.

The Preamble to our Organization's Charter expresses the determination of the peoples of the United Nations to

> "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

We the world can fully implement that determination by adopting a culture of peace. The Preamble goes on to extol the practice of tolerance and living together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and uniting our strength to maintain international peace and security and ensure that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest. The Charter, in other words, admonishes us all, individually and collectively, great and small, powerful and weak, to coexist in a culture of peace. Further, the Charter calls on us all to maintain international peace, to develop friendly relations among nations and to achieve international cooperation — all basic underpinnings of a culture of peace.

Fiji believes that education is probably the single most effective means to build a culture of peace. In fact, all the major United Nations conferences organized over the last six years — the Earth Summit in Rio, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the

World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing — have underlined education's central role in achieving the goals of justice, equality, development and peace. Similarly, the entire membership of UNESCO, at the last General Conference, reaffirmed their belief in education as the master key to democracy, development and peace.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to reform our education system. We need to look at our curricula, to examine the new needs of the next millennium, and design courses of study which will prepare us and our students — the leaders of the next generation — not only for expensive exercises in peacekeeping, but also for responding early to the precursor signs of threats to security which could be met through largely civil efforts to build peace and prevent war.

This is the principal reason that my country will continue to call from this rostrum for the urgent creation of a special United Nations division or unit to undertake preventive diplomacy in conflict prevention and resolution. Such a unit will ensure the early detection of potential conflicts so that our society can act in time and build peace rather than reacting to situations in which violence has already broken out.

In his "An Agenda for Peace", the former Secretary-General of the United Nations reminded us that peacekeeping is not sufficient; there is also peace-building. Peace is the basic prerequisite. There can be no lasting peace without development. There can be no development without peace. Peace should be a human right, a fundamental right of all human beings.

My delegation would therefore like to pay a special tribute to UNESCO for its active involvement in various culture of peace activities at global, regional and national levels, especially through its programmes of education, science, culture and communication, and for raising global awareness.

My delegation submits that it is a universal priority that nations eschew war and engage in a culture of peace.

A culture of peace will contribute to international cooperation for economic and social development and sustained economic growth in the developing countries of our world and permit the billions of dollars spent each year on armaments of death and mass destruction to be directed towards eradicating poverty, facilitating human development and making our world a better place to live in for all, developed and developing countries alike.

The early adoption of a declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace will benefit every nation of the world. We therefore call on the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): In the half century since the end of the Second World War mankind has witnessed a period of continuous conflict in many parts of the globe. By one estimate, there were more than 138 wars, resulting in more than 25 million deaths, during this period. Over the past three years alone, the United Nations has recorded 82 conflicts, of which 79 were within nations. It is ironic that mankind continues to suffer from the tragic consequences of violence and armed conflict even after the terrible bloodshed of the two World Wars.

The paradox is that peace is not alien to mankind. History abounds with examples of people who have learned to live in peace and harmony. Yet violence remains pervasive in human behaviour. It appears to be so ingrained in our culture that peace often appears as a momentary pause between conflicts.

Violence has its roots in the minds of men. Therefore, peace must become an integral part of our consciousness. As individuals, we need to internalize a culture of peace. And, as a society, we need to institutionalize the practice of peace.

The construction of a culture of peace is a welcome and timely initiative. Having itself experienced the tragic consequences of armed conflict, the Philippines stands solidly behind this initiative. We strongly support the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to engage the entire community of nations in constructing a culture of peace. For this reason, the Philippines joined other States in sponsoring a General Assembly resolution on a culture of peace. Within the context of our national culture of peace programme, the Philippines sponsored the Second International Forum on the Culture of Peace, held in Manila in 1995, in cooperation with UNESCO. As a follow-up to that forum, and in line with the 1996 peace agreement between the Philippine Government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), President Fidel Ramos has agreed to the proposal of the UNESCO Director-General to establish a Centre for the Culture of Peace in the Philippines. In addition, the Philippine

Government is developing both formal and non-formal peace-education programmes and establishing a network of peace centres throughout the country.

On the whole, we find document A/52/292, "Towards a culture of peace", a useful basis for discussion of the elements for a draft provisional declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace. We appreciate the efforts of UNESCO in preparing the document and making it available to delegations.

We agree with the Director-General of UNESCO that the time has come for the United Nations to address directly the challenge of promoting a culture of peace. While education will continue to play a crucial role in this regard, a concerted and coordinated effort along a wider front is needed. In this undertaking, Governments must take the lead. They, more than any other institution in society, can effectively mobilize the resolve and the resources to sustain progress in building a culture of peace. The draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace must therefore embody this cardinal principle.

We find it appropriate that the preamble of the draft declaration recalls relevant international agreements. However, the preamble should be followed by a comprehensive assessment of the progress achieved thus far in promoting a culture of peace. This will not only provide us with a reference point as to where we are at present, but will show us where we want to go, what obstacles lie in our path and how the United Nations can overcome those obstacles.

The draft programme of action correctly states that the challenge of promoting a culture of peace should be placed at the centre of the United Nations agenda. We share the view that the principal task of the United Nations is to link the various peace efforts throughout the world and to promote a global movement for peace. The United Nations should forge a network of partnerships between Governments and the institutions of civil society within and across national borders. Consensus-building, norm-setting joint actions are the strengths of the United Nations. The draft programme of action should draw on these strengths to reinforce UNESCO's programmes on education, information and communication.

We agree that some form of coordinating mechanism is needed to ensure the coordinated implementation of the programme of action. At the intergovernmental level, the General Assembly should look into the possibility of distributing tasks identified in the draft programme of action for implementation by the appropriate United Nations body. Coordinated support from the United Nations Secretariat and possibly from the Administrative Committee on Coordination should also be considered.

Of crucial importance to the implementation of the programme of action is the funding of activities to promote a culture of peace. A possible starting point is the pooling of resources already available within the United Nations system earmarked for peace-related activities to fund joint programmes. Cost-sharing of funds provided by Governments and non-governmental organizations will multiply the availability of resources to fund strategically important activities.

These, in brief, are the preliminary comments of the Philippine delegation on the draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace.

Mr. Castaneda-Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on agenda item 156, "Towards a culture of peace", on behalf of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador.

May I first of all express to the Secretary-General and to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) our gratitude for their submission of the report on the subject before us (A/52/292), which we believe is very important for our discussions in the Assembly. We also want to associate ourselves with the comments made by previous speakers representing delegations that are also sponsors of the draft resolution.

As was recognized by the Twenty-eighth General Conference of UNESCO in 1995, the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace is one of the greatest challenges facing humankind today. Since peace goes far beyond political, economic or cultural agreements between States, a process of assimilation of its basic values must take place in the minds of citizens, men and women.

The Central American peoples, directly or indirectly, have suffered the consequences of a prevailing culture of war. For more than a decade we were steadily drawn into a vortex of physical and spiritual destruction, which in the end substantially weakened the principles of democracy, freedom and social justice.

Central America has now achieved peace, with the support of the international community and various organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The shared effort to build a culture of peace in the region has changed from an academic discussion to a fact of everyday life, in which we are promoting and fostering the concrete values of peace: tolerance, respect for human rights, solidarity, social justice and the rejection of violence as a method of resolving social or any other type of conflicts, all elements that are contributing to the integral development of our peoples.

For Central Americans, promoting a culture of peace means having a profound and scientific knowledge of the society in which we act, of its diversity and its history; and it means having a clear vision of the society we want to build for the future, respecting its values and its potential. This is an enormous challenge, to our peoples and our leaders, because it involves creatively empowering tomorrow's citizens, in an evolving and supportive social environment, as people capable of developing their own positive energy.

We are convinced that education plays an indispensable role in this creative process. But this means an education that transcends formal aspects and that meets the real needs and specific conditions of each of our peoples. An education of this type would require, we believe, at least the three following cognitive and developmental levels.

First, it would require education for self-esteem, since societies experiencing conflict are undeniably divided societies that need to strengthen within the collective consciousness the sense of belonging. Education needs to give an institutional form to that sense of belonging, developing self-esteem in each of our citizens, making it possible for them to accept universal values and enrich those values with their own.

Secondly, it would require education for solidarity, in order to ensure, as a fundamental prerequisite for collective harmony, the permanent integration of our peoples on a solid basis of personal and national self-esteem, an education in which the principle of shared responsibility is increasingly strengthened in the minds and hearts of citizens.

Thirdly, it would require education for development, in which the building of a world of spiritual and material satisfactions is ensured on a basis of active and supportive self-esteem, since we believe that one of the purposes of education is to give the individual the capacity for self-knowledge, communication and satisfaction.

Taking into account the spirit of these reflections, we would like to highlight the universal appeal made by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the opening of the National Forum for Reflection on Education and a Culture of Peace, held in April 1993 in El Salvador. In that appeal he emphasized, *inter alia*, that the promotion of learning about and experiencing the culture of peace requires both a formal education and an informal one, such as that obtained in the various facets of daily life; that what is important is to give priority to contacts, exchanges and cultural creativity at the national and international levels as instruments for acknowledging and respecting our fellow human beings and the differences between us; and that the strengthening of international cooperation aimed at eliminating the socio-economic causes of armed conflict and wars is one of the primary tasks in building a better world for all.

This appeal was heard by, among others, more than 400 parliamentarians from various legislative assemblies throughout the Americas, meeting in Quebec City, Canada, from 18 to 22 September 1997. In the declaration adopted in the framework of the First Parliamentary Conference of the Americas, they expressed their support for the UNESCO initiative aimed at disseminating the values of peace through respect for human rights and the strengthening of a culture of peace. The time has thus come to turn words into deeds, to deepen the implementation of national programmes for a culture of peace in every Member State, to develop such programmes in States that have not done so and to contribute in this way to the enrichment of the collective consciousness of the international community.

In the report submitted to Member States by the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director-General of UNESCO, we find many important elements to use in the drafting of a declaration and a programme of action on the culture of peace. We believe that the contributions we delegations can make in the months to come will be extremely valuable in further refining these drafts.

Lastly, we are firmly committed to giving impetus to this initiative, which we believe will contribute enormously to creating an international environment conducive to an understanding of the values of a culture of peace in the minds of all men and women. We are

certain that this brings us even closer to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to the building of a much better world for us all.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): It gives me great pleasure this morning to express the enthusiastic support of my delegation for the draft resolution that has just been introduced by the representative of Bangladesh, entitled "Towards a culture of peace", a subject that is of very great importance for us.

Côte d'Ivoire has co-sponsored this draft resolution, and we fully associate ourselves with the relevant arguments stated by the other sponsors and all other previous speakers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the excellent report submitted on this item, which appears in document A/52/292.

Peacekeeping activities, management of humanitarian situations caused by armed conflicts and the defence of human rights are now more than ever at the forefront of United Nations work. It is thus with good reason that these activities have a prominent place in the new configuration of the United Nations.

We commend, admire and respect the many successes of United Nations peacekeeping operations, which prove, if proof is needed, the ability and expertise the Organization has acquired in this important and crucial field. Furthermore, large sums of money have been released to conduct and complete these missions.

Thus, while it is true that there is a need to intervene in violent conflicts after they have broken out in order to try to restore, maintain and consolidate peace and get down to the work of reconstruction, we believe that this it is just as essential and also more effective to prevent such violence by attacking its causes. Hence the justification for fostering a culture of peace in our various societies.

Furthermore, during the post-conflict period, no reconstruction effort would be truly complete unless it included an element involving the culture of peace.

We in Côte d'Ivoire have made peace our second religion, because we have learned that peace is our most precious possession. Without peace, no constructive, sustainable activity is possible. Thanks to the climate of peace that exists in our country, which is maintained by the ongoing and patient practice of dialogue, we have enjoyed, and by God's grace, we continue to enjoy, solid stability and cohesion, which have allowed us to devote all of our energy to the development of the country. This has all been made possible thanks to the culture of peace that is deeply rooted in our societal heritage.

The aim of draft resolution A/52/L.4 — the development of a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace — responds, we believe, to the basic concern of all the Members of the United Nations, because it is true — and I defy anyone to prove otherwise — that all of us here are peace-loving nations.

Thus, helping to bring about this transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace is certainly a noble endeavour in which none of us would want to fail to participate.

This is why my delegation supports the proposal of the representative of Bangladesh to adopt by consensus the draft resolution contained in A/52/L.4.

Mr. Saguier Caballero (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for the delegation of Paraguay to speak on behalf of the Rio Group on agenda item 156, entitled "Towards a culture of peace".

A culture of peace is today a vital issue for the entire world. The transformation of a culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence is a response to the principles established in the preamble of the United Nations Charter:

> "to promote social progress and better standards of life ... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

For some time, humanity has aspired to create a global strategy for coexistence and respect for individual and collective values and for human rights. It also aspires to promote and teach attitudes of respect for the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance and solidarity as the basis for rejecting violence and disrespect for life. Most importantly, it has sought to avoid armed conflicts, with all their negative repercussions.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in promoting this programme, has been inspired by these values.

Furthermore, its prime objective is to prepare the world for the transition from a culture of violence and armed confrontation, fratricidal struggles and great conflagrations, towards a culture of peace. The countries members of the Rio Group desire a better world, a twenty-first century governed by the principles of peace, peaceful coexistence, tolerance, respect for human rights and friendship among nations and ethnic and religious groups. We also wish to develop a culture that facilitates universal access to education and work.

We fully understand that this is a task neither for individuals, individual countries or organizations, nor for the United Nations alone. As UNESCO has pointed out, it requires the participation of all governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil and religious communities and the media. That is why the culture of peace should be the curriculum for educators and the guiding force for politicians, parliamentarians, leaders and, in the long run, all those responsible for building the future.

Mrs. Martínez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Although my country's position has already been laid out by the representative of Paraguay in his statement on behalf of the Rio Group, my delegation wishes to add a few notes of its own.

Fifty years ago, the leaders of the world gathered together for the purpose of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It is therefore time that we renew our commitment to working together to promote a universal endeavour towards a culture of peace. The Members of the United Nations have the indubitable duty to promote an attitude of peace, respect and solidarity and to live in harmony with those principles. Domestically, the essence of the concept of a culture of peace lies in the right to build a future based on justice, democratic participation, adequate education and respect for traditions that promote and respect human rights, all in conjunction with the exercise of the right to development.

The very concept of a culture of peace is deeply rooted in the people of Ecuador. We proudly proclaim ourselves peace-lovers and strive to maintain the label of "island of peace" by which we are known internationally. However, we recognize that this positive attitude must be accompanied by a policy of economic, financial, social and environmental consensus-building, one of the most important tasks facing mankind. The road towards a culture of peace in today's interdependent world requires international cooperation. Peace is not merely the absence of armed conflict; it encompasses the non-militar dimensions of human security and sustainabl development. The people of Ecuador continues t struggle to achieve the ideals of peace with development

My delegation welcomes and applauds th submission of the excellent report of the Director-Genera of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultura Organization on educational activities under the projec "Towards a culture of peace", contained in documen A/52/292.

In this connection, I would point out that m delegation supports the content of the report and stresse its useful contribution in listing the possible elements o a draft programme of action. We recognize that only th linking of equality, development and peace can forev avert the spectre of war and inequality among huma beings. We therefore reaffirm the commitments we hav undertaken at the major United Nations Conferences.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to express its firm commitment to participating actively, at the fifty-thir session of the General Assembly, in the study of a dra declaration and programme of action on a culture o peace, which we hope will be widely welcomed.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Since its inception 1945, the United Nations has spearheaded humanity common yearning for a peaceful, just and prosperou world — a world freed at last from war, greed and oth abominable human and social impulses.

The brilliant and forward-looking authors of th Charter of the United Nations and the rest of us who a the beneficiaries of their collective wisdom an imagination have reason to hope for a firm consolidatio of a democratic, stable and compassionate world ord that would make a clear break with the pas characterized by two unprecedented and most destructiv wars in this century.

Not much has changed since 1945. Unfortunatel the world continues to witness many, not fewer, incider of just and unjust wars, regional conflicts, civil an ethnic strife, acute forms of suffering, environment degradation and unmitigated endangerment of life itse

Therefore, it is more than appropriate that t international community be seized today with t discussion of agenda item 156, entitled "Towards culture of peace". Furthermore, it is two years before t

next millennium and it is important for us to redouble our efforts to reaffirm our commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which has brought untold sorrow to mankind.

There on the horizon exists a new vision for a peaceful and harmonious world and public hopes for social advance and economic prosperity.

My Government is committed to the principles of the maintenance of international peace and security, which would ensure a peaceful future for generations to come. One important development that we have gone through as the international community is the reaching of a historic juncture where there exists a preference for dialogue rather than confrontation, which obviously augurs well for our common desire for global peace and security. Examples of this abound globally.

Needless to say, international cooperation and solidarity are important in our world today. It should be stressed further that cooperation might be based on mutual respect and benefit among nations.

At independence in 1990 the Namibian Government embarked on a very progressive policy, a policy of national reconciliation. The Namibian Government and its people have taken this very difficult but necessary process, which is taking due account of our long struggle for independence and has moved on to say that all Namibians will strive together to achieve national reconciliation and to foster peace, unity and a common loyalty to our country.

Therefore, Namibia, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/52/L.4, supports the report (A/52/292) of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). We feel that the report provides us with all the necessary elements to draft a United Nations declaration on the culture of peace, including the necessary modus operandi for its implementation and promotion.

I would at this stage express my delegation's appreciation for the harmonization and collaboration which exist between UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly as they relate to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). We welcome the memorandum of understanding which these organizations have signed.

It is absolutely essential that we address the root causes of violence and hence the actions we intend to take in terms of creating a culture of peace, which would assist in preventing the occurrence of violence. The old saying that prevention is better than cure is apt and applies in this case. Further, my delegation believes this will be a cost-effective interventionist approach.

It is important that we take account of the various efforts already under way by numerous actors to make the transformation from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and non-violence globally. I therefore have the honour to inform the Assembly of the efforts my Government has made in this regard.

We in Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe have embarked on education in human rights and democracy, with generous financial support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), beginning in September this year. It is envisaged that this project will last for four years and will be concerned with the development of educational materials, the development of an appropriate methodology for the integration of the new materials in school curricula, teacher trainers and teachers themselves. This project is executed by the Ministries of Education and UNESCO in our respective countries. In our view, this project is complementary and supportive of all other actions for peace taken by the United Nations system, such as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peace-building, disarmament and economic development. We would thus call upon the respective bodies to coordinate these efforts so that they are mutually reinforcing.

Similarly, there should also be collaboration on the implementation of the outcome of all recent global conferences, as this would contribute to fostering a culture of peace.

Finally, Mr. President, may I leave you with the thought that, with the effective partnership of Governments, civil society and international organizations, the United Nations declaration on the culture of peace can become a reality.

Mrs. Flores Prida (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Agenda item 156, "Towards a culture of peace", is on the General Assembly's agenda for the first time, and it is therefore logical that it attracts our interest and attention. The fact that the General Assembly has not considered the issue before does not mean that it is unknown or remote from us. Since the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) — and, in particular, its Director-General,

Federico Mayor, gave life to this proposal, we have followed its development closely. We waited impatiently for the Twenty-ninth General Conference of UNESCO to carry out an in-depth discussion and examination of this concept, based on the proposals outlined by the Director-General, to give the Assembly a more comprehensive overview. My delegation welcomes Mr. Federico Mayor's concern to engage the entire United Nations system in a broad debate about this project.

It has rightly been said that if wars begin in the minds of men, it is from the minds of men that we must banish violence. We would add much more: it is also in the minds of men that selfishness, greed, racism and inequality are born. Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten without denying the values of our species that the human being is above all a social being and that — in the words of Thomas Mann — man is above all himself and his circumstances.

What does this mean? It means that the human being is the reflection of his time and the society he has to live in. It means that change has to be deep, almost structural; that the causes of the ills that we wish to do away with lie in the inequality which exists in the world, in the ever-increasing, abysmal differences between rich and poor, in social injustice and in inequality among nations.

We cannot speak of a true culture of peace if we do not tackle the roots of problems or arrive at a clear-cut definition of their nature and their scope.

How can we speak in theoretical and philosophical terms of a culture of peace in a world where the growing numbers of poor people are becoming ever poorer, and where 358 individuals have assets greater than the combined annual revenue of countries inhabited by 2.5 billion people — almost 45 per cent of the world's population. Not even the deceptive rhetoric of neo-liberal globalization can gloss over today's harsh realities. Over 507 million people — nearly 13 per cent of the world's population — die before the age of 40; more than 800 million persons are illiterate; and more than 158 million children are suffering from malnutrition.

The gaps created by this imposed model in such key areas as health, education and social security, as well as the generalized exclusion of majority groups, place us on a very dangerous path. But the palliatives that are being sought today are not designed to find equitable solutions. On the contrary, they are aimed at avoiding social revolt, whose cause is not violence itself but injustice to the utmost degree.

Culture, viewed as an integral whole, forms the basis for the intellectual development of the human being. It presupposes equal access by children, men and women to the science of knowledge, to the enjoyment of the beautiful and precious things inherited by humankind, to the empowerment of the intellect. Culture, in all its diversity, must play a role in communication and in promoting greater understanding among peoples and countries.

Peace means much more than just the absence of war. There will be no peace without economic and social development, and vice versa. Peace entails a commitment to renounce force, or the use of force, in international relations. It demands observance of the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity of all nations. It means opposing any manifestation of colonialism or neocolonialism, racism or racial discrimination, or human rights violations, wherever they may occur.

Peace is inconceivable when, under the dictates of a great Power, attempts are made to impose on the world unilateral extraterritorial measures and laws aimed at subduing independent peoples and nations by force and by intimidation.

We are convinced that, if these elements are incorporated into the draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace, we will have made a great contribution to giving new and fresh impetus to this project.

In the meantime, my delegation believes that as a result of this debate, the draft resolution that is circulating today in this Hall should request, first of all — and before a final draft is submitted to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly — opinions in writing from all Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on the report (A/52/292) submitted to us by the Secretary-General.

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to continue to work towards a genuine culture of peace that is founded on a world of equity and social justice and in which the right to development will cease to be a dream.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing the General Assembly take up agenda item 156, "Towards a culture of peace", during this session. We are convinced that peace and its culture are no longer a mere desirable objective but have become a

comprehensive process aimed at ensuring institutional transformation and long-term action aimed at building the fortresses of peace in the minds of men.

At the twenty-ninth General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held some days ago, the head of the Sudanese delegation met with Mr. Federico Mayor, the Director-General of the organization, to take up important issues of concern to both the Sudan and UNESCO. At the forefront of these issues was the question of a culture of peace and ways and means to reinforce the cooperation existing between the Organization and my country in this area.

It is perhaps incumbent upon me to state that since UNESCO initiated the concept of a culture of peace, my country has been cooperating with UNESCO in the achievement of its objectives and purposes. My country participated, with high-level delegations, in the Barcelona and Noordwijk, Netherlands, rounds of talks, held in 1995 and 1996, to discuss issues of concern to the Sudan. During both rounds, the governmental delegation and other participating delegations freely exchanged viewpoints on substantive issues related to peace and development in my country. The Barcelona Declaration reaffirmed the commitment to continue dialogue in the context of the initiative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) States.

At the national level, my country has taken serious steps towards enabling a culture of peace, following the conclusion of the peace agreement of Khartoum of 12 April 1997, through the various programmes disseminated by the National Unity Broadcasting Corporation, television and the print media, as well as through seminars and school curricula aimed at instilling the values of a culture of peace in the minds of men and women: to promote respect of life and of human rights; the renunciation of violence in all its forms; the adherence to the principles of democracy, freedom, justice, tolerance and solidarity; and the acceptance of differences in others, and the promotion of understanding and coexistence among all ethnic, religious and cultural groups as well as among individuals.

It is my pleasure to inform the Assembly that we have received positive feedback from this campaign aimed at consolidating peace and its culture to the point that those undertaking the campaign have been encouraged to intensify their efforts in this regard.

My delegation is among the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/52/L.4) before the Assembly. Members would have noted that this is a balanced draft advocating principles and values shared by all of humankind. Peace is the common heritage of humanity, and it is the duty of this international Organization to transform it into a culture of peace for the benefit of succeeding generations.

My delegation, having considered General Assembly document A/52/292, believes that the elements proposed by the Director-General of UNESCO provide a good basis for formulating a United Nations declaration and plan of action for a culture of peace.

Mr. Mwamba Kapanga (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): There are many definitions of "culture", but we generally understand it to mean man's intellectual activities, his behaviour and his creativity. Because of its special position and its importance, culture occupies a prominent place. We see this and appreciate it. Culture must also be developed in order to advance all its ramifications — political, social and scientific — which are inseparable from it. Culture is in fact the origin of civilization; civilization is the origin of science; and science, today, is the source of spectacular, revolutionary scientific discoveries.

Given the dynamic and constant interaction between culture and politics, we may definitely say that culture and politics reinforce each other. Hence the political interest in the item before us — a culture of peace. We now need to define this political interest as being a firm will to prevent the international situation from getting any worse.

We therefore believe that a culture of peace means making humankind aware of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the provisions of international and humanitarian law; it means not intervening in a State's domestic affairs or accepting occupation and control by a third party of another State's resources. On the contrary, it means resisting attempts to affect the internal decisions of a State, to threaten its sovereignty and re-establish colonial influence, at a time when the world is calling for justice, equality and consecration of the right of peoples to self-determination.

An essential element in propagating a culture of peace is to refrain from implementing policies that would widen the gulf between the rich developed countries and poor third world countries, unable to ensure growth, to

make the best use of their natural and human resources, with the resultant unemployment, financial deficit and indebtedness worsening year after year.

A culture of peace, to our mind, reflects the desire for knowledge and the desire to feel secure. Civilization which results from a culture of peace must tackle all of the manifestations of ignorance, oppression and underdevelopment. Likewise, a culture of peace cannot remain neutral in the face of the scourges of foreign occupation, famine, poverty, exile and oppression, because of the burden they impose on the international community and their threat to international peace and security. They also sow anarchy in international relations and encourage recourse to military power alone. But such force cannot guide the world, because it is blind and brutal. The world needs cooperation, solidarity and mutual assistance to bridge the widening, deepening gap between wealth and power on the one hand and suffering, poverty and death on the other.

A culture of peace is, by definition, a culture opposed to war. It cannot remain silent, given the challenges facing our human society.

Allow me to stress the need not to treat the culture of peace as if in today's world there were neither wars nor motives for war. Indeed, the history of humanity clearly shows how many noble ideas and cultures have been wiped out because nobody fought for them when they were violated by the foes of peace and of a culture of peace.

The Arabs, who have made peace an integral part of their civilization, their heritage and their daily lives — indeed, an essential part of their lives and their customs — find it quite normal for the United Nations and its specialized agencies to continue to work constantly for the values and their dissemination. Thus, the Arabs have agreed to the United Nations peace plan for the Middle East, whereas the Israeli side rejects United Nations resolutions to restore peace on the basis of the principle of land for peace, and refuses to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). The current Israeli Government is doing everything it can to sow the seeds of a new war, of wars of aggression involving the possession by Israel of destructive nuclear weapons and the establishment of alliances to encircle Syria from the north and the south.

A culture of peace is a legitimate aspiration for a better future, an effort to avoid conflict by tackling the true causes. It is not, as certain malicious people say, a question of subjugating people and preventing them from achieving their ambitions — that is, to liberate their land and eliminate the injustice that they suffered during previous periods of oppression.

If the very essence of a culture of peace is to intervene in order to avoid the outbreak of armed conflicts, it is up to the international community to deter the current Israeli Government from pursuing policies that run counter to a culture of peace. The international community must use every means to force Israel not to engage in policies of colonization and settlement and to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories in the Syrian Golan and Palestine to the 4 June 1967 line. It must also urge Israel to withdraw unconditionally from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa and to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The right of peoples to defend their lands, their independence and their sovereignty should be an essential element in a culture of peace. The peoples and States of the world must continue to support this struggle, because experience has shown that a policy of violating the rights and sovereignty of peoples, which runs counter to the principles of a culture of peace, is a breeding ground for violence and bloodbaths.

We believe that the world's diversity of cultures is something positive; it enriches the culture of peace, which should draw its inspiration from every culture.

We should not become involved in an interminable game in which the cultures of certain countries are imposed on other peoples to the detriment of their cultures, traditions and customs. In speaking of culture, especially a culture of peace, we must draw a distinction between one culture and another and between one cultural identity and another. There are, in fact, two types of culture: the first is the national, human culture — the culture of peace; the second is the culture of domination and aggression, whose aim it is to cause moral decline, to overcome other cultures so as to dominate them, to weaken them so as to be able to annihilate and control them. The fear here is that culture itself is becoming the spark that ignites conflicts and struggles between peoples and countries. This is not a culture of peace, which we all desire.

The Syrian Arab Republic, through its Permanent Mission to the United Nations, has taken note of the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO), contained in document A/52/292. We are pleased to see paragraphs in the report stressing the need to increase understanding among cultures, and to see that UNESCO is publishing works on the history of mankind, the general history of Africa, the history of the civilizations of Central Asia, the contribution of Arab civilizations to Latin American culture via the Iberian peninsula, aspects of Islamic culture and civilization, the general history of Latin America and the history of the Caribbean.

The delegation of Syria welcomes the paragraphs that mention the provisions in the United Nations Charter and the Constitution of UNESCO, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which are contained in the section relating to the elements for a draft provisional declaration on a culture of peace. Nevertheless, we consider the failure in paragraph 43 to refer to foreign occupation constitutes a lack of realism, as that is one of the most serious problems threatening global peace and security. Without peace and security, all the initiatives aimed at spreading a culture of peace would be mere intellectual luxury. We therefore call for the insertion of a paragraph stating that the cultures, customs and cultural heritage of peoples must be respected.

Syria, whose people have inherited an age-old, renowned civilization that gave humankind its first alphabet, aspires, today as always, to a world free from occupation and hegemony, a world that can enjoy the principles of equality, justice and peace.

Mr. Boucher (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on the draft resolution before us, A/52/L.4, on a culture of peace, on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations.

As we look towards the new millennium, the eruption and proliferation of conflict, hatred and ethnic and religious strife following the end of the cold war provide a sober reminder of our legacy to the next generation. It is therefore crucial that the Organization re-examine, on a continuing basis, its stewardship in preserving and enhancing the peace. CARICOM States believe that the nature and complexity of today's conflicts have found the Organization somewhat unprepared, even to the extent of putting its integrity at risk.

Ninety per cent of conflicts are now concentrated within countries, not between countries; 90 per cent of casualties are civilians, not soldiers. Combatants now disregard the very humanitarian norms which the Organization has established. The problems which the United Nations has encountered in waging peace in this uncharted territory defy simple solutions. The traditional machinery, stretched thin, is in need of repair and reform.

We have learned many lessons from peacekeeping experience. Instructions have sometimes been blurred. Peacekeepers have at times been expected to assume tasks for which they were not mandated, organized or equipped. Planning and logistics, not to mention the Organization's response capacity, have at times left much to be desired; and the crisis in financing continues to hamper the efficiency of operations. In emphasizing the difficult task of peacekeeping, however, let us not forget the debt we owe to those who have served the Organization in this noble cause, for which many have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Experience has also taught us that the mission of peacekeeping is multifaceted. It encompasses many crucial supportive actions. The mission, in its broadest sense, must coordinate and implement humanitarian relief, civil affairs, electoral assistance, police and judicial reorganization, human rights and economic and social reconstruction — actions that must be sustained long after the guns have been silenced.

These factors are important. But they are not enough in themselves to foster an era of lasting peace. They must be bolstered by actions which address the cause of conflict at its root. CARICOM States support the view that the prospects for lasting peace must extend beyond traditional responses to conflicts after they have erupted. We believe that the concept of a culture of peace, which this draft resolution seeks to make operational, is an idea whose time has come. We therefore applaud the pioneering work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in advancing this initiative.

A culture of peace will build on the foundations of an Agenda for Peace, launched by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and on the initiatives on peace and security stemming from the current reform process. It is consistent with the programmes of action adopted at recent world conferences. It consists of a set of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect social interaction and sharing, based on the principles of freedom, democracy and social justice. It rejects violence and promotes respect for life, equal rights, freedom of expression, tolerance, gender equity and understanding

between nations and between ethnic and religious groups. It would take root in peoples' hearts and minds, and would foster behavioural change through dialogue and negotiation, good-neighbourly relations and international solidarity. The culture of peace is a process to which every nation, large or small, developed or developing, can contribute, drawing from its rich traditions and culture.

CARICOM States share the view that the challenge posed by a culture of peace is broad and far-reaching and would require the priority and sustained commitment of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and civil society. We deeply believe, however, that it would be a fitting salute by the international community to the new millennium.

This initiative holds considerable promise for meeting the Charter obligation to save future generations from the scourge of war. We stand ready to play our part in its implementation. Against this background, I wish on behalf of the CARICOM States to commend draft resolution A/52/L.4 for unanimous adoption.

Ms. Camerano (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The diversity which is our shared wealth is also our great tragedy: namely, the violence resulting from our great inability to live with our differences.

Peace is a very sensitive issue for my country, given the need to look at the present and the future not from the standpoint of silencing the guns in order to put an end to conflicts, but, rather, from the standpoint of the absolute need to establish a coexistence that enables us to sow the seeds of peace as a means of development and progress. On behalf of Colombia, I would therefore like to highlight the importance of considering the item entitled "Towards a culture of peace".

For some years now we have been working around the issue, giving it different names — a culture of peace, education for peace, peaceful coexistence — but always with the same objective: to live in peace. After many exercises and the implementation of many programmes, an integral process was developed containing an educational plan to inculcate a culture of peace in every segment of society and the civil population; the forces of law and order; those that would destabilize peace and coexistence; and even children. The purpose was to begin to create a new human being with stronger moral values and principles, a human being who is more tolerant of differences, more productive economically, with ideals, loyalty and virtue in political matters and embracing social unity; in sum, to try to alter elements that are deeply rooted in a population, as well as those that are emerging.

This path of building peace in Colombia led us to an election last Sunday in which about 9,500,000 votes were cast — the largest ballot in the history of our country. As a newspaper headline put it, Colombia voted for Colombia. It was the defeat of intimidation, the expression of a people through a poll that expressed the desire for peace and the desire to say "No" to the violent and all their acts.

I believe this is the result of having sown the culture of peace for years. This is something that is hard to measure but has now unexpectedly been turned into something tangible by the Colombian people — a mandate. The challenge now is how to make it a reality.

Peace and its management must be, according to the third paragraph of the explanatory memorandum to document A/52/191,

> "a positive, dynamic, participatory process linked intrinsically to democracy, justice and development".

I wish to share very briefly with the Assembly information about a pilot plan that we began a year ago in a region of conflict on how to implement a peace process in such areas. We worked on the problem directly with the author of the methodology.

To begin, three fundamental components were identified: the socio-economic, justice and coexistence components. We convened all the national and regional institutions of the State — the forces of law and order, civil and political society, churches and non-governmental organizations — in order to draw up a 10-year development plan covering everything from infrastructure to training in different areas, such as education, health, housing, in other words everything that has been termed the socio-economic component. To develop the justice component, we have brought together all the relevant institutions to work against impunity and corruption and to develop a programme around the concept of coexistence and human rights, an area in which we have succeeded in finding the causes of violence, the role of each actor and the commitment to resolve the problem.

Experience has shown us that one component alone will not lead us to the desired result, and that socio-

economic development by itself is not enough. As one of our peasants would say, "Doctor, what are we to do with roads, schools and health centres if we don't have the right to life?"

For all these reasons, we reiterate our commitment to the topic "Towards a culture of peace".

Mr. Ka (Senegal) *(interpretation from French)*: Our consideration of agenda item 156 is, in the view of my delegation, of special importance, because is it not said that peace is another name for development? I therefore commend, on behalf of Senegal, the excellent report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Towards a culture of peace", which was drawn up at the request of the General Assembly in resolution 51/101.

Peace, we all agree, is not just the absence of war. Even in times of peace very often there are situations which shock the moral conscience of humanity.

The physical or moral violence that exists in every country of the world — to varying degrees, obviously — is a fact of life that the international community cannot ignore without risking long-term destabilization. Racial and ethnic hatred, ignorance, cultural contempt and the suppression of public freedoms are among the biggest dangers to the peaceful coexistence of human societies. I would also refer to a lack of ethics, religious intolerance, xenophobia, poverty and the denial of human rights and freedoms as resulting from the absence of a culture of peace.

This grim picture often also includes conflicts between States, which tend to destabilize human societies and sow a dangerous culture of violence in people's minds, a culture which no longer spares even children, women and the elderly. If we let this kind of culture develop, humanity as a whole runs the risk of being annihilated in the end. This is why my country, which is known for its devotion to peace and solidarity between peoples and nations, feels that the promotion of a culture of peace must be among the fundamental concerns of the United Nations, and that its promotion must eventually help us move from the logic of force to the force of logic and dialogue. This means giving up violence and, above all, honouring the culture of peace on a daily basis; it is a constant search for dialogue.

That is why we became a sponsor of the draft resolution "Towards a culture of peace". We hope that the international community of States, non-governmental organizations, civil society, religious groups and local bodies will, together, work vigorously to promote education and awareness so that peace and tolerance may prevail throughout the world, together with a diversity of opinions and ideas and respect for basic human rights, including the right to physical and moral integrity. We will achieve this through ongoing education for our citizens, respect for differences, a willingness to enter into dialogue and the implementation of strategies focusing on social cohesion.

My country appeals to all Member States to support the draft resolution on a culture of peace and, in particular, to send a strong message of peace to the rest of the world.

Mr. Dumitriu (Romania): My delegation took note with interest of the excellent report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on educational activities under the project "Towards a culture of peace", as contained in document A/52/292. We have studied with particular attention the elements for a draft provisional United Nations declaration on a culture of peace, and we may say that UNESCO deserves our praise for a comprehensive and visionary document which stems from the fundamental objective enshrined in its Constitution.

The United Nations system has come to a point where profound reform is more needed and expected than ever. During this session the innovative spirit and the political will of Member States are being tested as to their capacity for preparing our Organization for the challenges of the next millennium. Reforming the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat is essential to ensure the institutional and structural readiness of the United Nations to become more efficient and more influential.

Reforming mentalities through education is also fundamental to complement these efforts. It is in this context that we should see and judge the focus UNESCO seeks to place on promoting a culture of peace. In the era of globalization and the information superhighway, the chances of succeeding are greater than decades ago. The United Nations in general, and UNESCO, as a specialized body, in particular, should fully take the opportunities of our time to continue to be authoritative voices in the new environment of cyberspace. It is precisely what the preamble to the UNESCO Constitution describes as a determination:

"to develop and to increase the means of communication between ... peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each others' lives".

The study of the report of the Director-General of UNESCO revealed to my delegation what a profound interlinkage exists between the culture of peace and the culture of democracy. On 4 September 1997, the participants in the Third International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies, which took place in Bucharest, Romania, adopted a political declaration entitled "Progress Review and Recommendations" [A/52/334]. The document echoes many of the principles envisaged as a basis for building a culture of peace. I would just signal a few of the conclusions the Bucharest Conference arrived at.

First, the global communication revolution and the global wave of democratization are mutually reinforcing. Secondly, managing globalization implies a "new moral contract for peace" [A/52/334, p.7]. Thirdly, the consolidation of democracy requires strengthening civic education to create broad awareness of the rights of citizens and of the responsibilities of governmental institutions. Fourthly, supporting civic education is essential for long-term progress in democratization. Fifthly, civil society organizations can make powerful contributions to sustaining human development in all societies. Sixthly, the media has become a major venue for dialogue within and between States and also an international actor with a distinct role on the international stage. The media can help keep politics open, responsive and accountable.

At the same time, many of the elements seen as essential ingredients for a culture of peace, as defined by UNESCO, are also components of a solid democratic culture and state of mind. Among them we have found those attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing; an enhanced role and responsibility for civil society; the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms through education; facilitating informal and non-formal education in a broader range of social institutions, including families, local communities and the mass media; recognition of equal rights and opportunities for women and men; and attachment to the principles of tolerance, pluralism and participation.

These elements transcend the demarcation lines between North and South, East and West, developed and developing. They are part of the philosophy of collective action on which the United Nations is based. The efforts to promote a culture of peace are complementary to all other actions for peace by the United Nations system, including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace-building, disarmament, sustainable human development and democratization. A reformed United Nations should not underestimate any of them.

Mr. Yacoubou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation welcomes the inclusion of item 156, entitled "Towards a culture of peace", on the agenda of the plenary of the General Assembly.

Here, I should like to thank the Secretary-General and, through him, the Director-General of UNESCO, for the report submitted to us.

The most urgent task all developing countries must face today on the eve of the new millennium is none other than sustainable development, which can only be assured in a climate of peace and stability. That is why I should like to reaffirm here the profound commitment of my country, Benin, to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are a legitimate concern of the international community now, at the end of the twentieth century.

In view of the fratricidal conflicts that continue to shake the world, particularly in Africa, the commemoration next year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be an opportunity to work for a culture of peace through mobilization against intolerance, racial discrimination and violence. In order to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, it is urgent that the international community act to replace the culture of violence now prevailing in the world by a culture of peace.

Accordingly, we can only commend the work already done by UNESCO for a culture of peace among Member States. The important role played by the non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society in this joint effort to promote a culture of peace should also be stressed. The various activities initiated and carried out in this framework should be encouraged and supported by Governments and the organizations of the United Nations system.

The advent of peace is possible today thanks to certain precursory events which have occurred, particularly over the last 10 years. With the benefit of these events, we must now commit ourselves to working every day and every hour to combat the phenomenon of

war and all manifestations of violence, intolerance, xenophobia and racism at all levels of our societies. We must fertilize and enrich the human mind with values, attitudes and sharing, behaviour based on freedom, justice, democracy and solidarity. We will thus take a fundamental step towards the prevention of conflicts and preventive diplomacy.

A willingness to engage in dialogue and negotiation must also be cultivated, and should be the main instrument of conflict resolution. But success in dialogue and negotiation presupposes the practice by each of the protagonists of the basic values of honesty, sincerity, good faith and a sincere desire to put an end to violence.

Education remains the linchpin in this ultimate endeavour. It begins in the family, continues through formal, non-formal and informal structures, and returns to the family. Safeguarding and strengthening the family structure is therefore more relevant than ever.

Freedom and the exercise of freedom should assume forms that include a feeling of belonging to a family and a society. It should not be confused with individualism, the negative effect of which on individual lives, societies and communities, nations and continents, is inestimable.

All entities in the United Nations system can help to inculcate these noble values, which have been forgotten but are still very much present in the heart of our beings. In addition to UNESCO, the Department of Public Information (DPI) can also make a valuable contribution.

While on the subject of peace and the values of democracy and human rights, I cannot avoid painful thoughts of Africa and the various overwhelming crises it is enduring.

I am thinking of the Great Lakes region and of Central Africa. My delegation is convinced that the current situation is not inevitable and that Africa will finally overcome it. The efforts made thus by far the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including UNESCO, and the countries that are friends of Africa, as well as the Organization of African Unity and the African Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, do seem encouraging, however.

I should not wish to conclude this statement on the culture of peace without briefly mentioning Benin's experience in this area. The interest of this experience is that my country, ruled by a single-party system in the 1970s and 1980s, made a smooth and peaceful transition — following the National Conference of Active Forces of the Nation — to a democratic regime in 1991. Since that time, this process, which respects democratic values, has been continuing and gaining strength in freedom and respect for the institutions of the nation.

Human rights, the values of acceptance of others, tolerance and the right to be different, are all precepts that are cultivated and lived out on a daily basis in Benin, because the effective implementation of these values remains incontestably fertile soil for producing a culture of peace.

"Love one another", Our Lord said. Our daily acts must bear the mark of these words of love, solidarity, union and peace.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to refer to agenda item 156, and specifically to draft resolution A/52/L.4, entitled "Towards a culture of peace", which Peru is co-sponsoring for the third consecutive year since its introduction in the Third Committee and, on this occasion, in the plenary of the General Assembly.

One of the primary aims of Peru's foreign policy since its emergence on the international scene as an independent State is fundamentally linked to the maintenance of international peace and security, international integration and cooperation, and the steadfast rejection of a culture of war and violence. Hence our defence of international law and of the United Nations Charter, hence the treaties we have signed, and hence our full concurrence with and adherence to the guiding purposes and principles of the United Nations.

As part of that ongoing endeavour, Peru attaches the greatest importance to addressing the culture of peace which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has advanced as a set of values, attitudes and forms of conduct that both embody and inspire social interaction and exchange based upon the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance and solidarity, while rejecting violence and striving to avert conflicts by seeking to address their root causes and resolving problems through dialogue and negotiation, while ensuring the full exercise of all rights and providing the means to participate in society's endogenous development.

On that basis Peru, as a founding State of the United Nations, reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the obligations arising out of the UNESCO Constitution. However, to give effect to that commitment, it is essential to ensure, now and in the near future, that UNESCO, with the support of its members, is placed at the service of peace and coexistence within and among nations.

When today's challenges extend beyond State borders, it is fundamental that good faith and the commitment of States to a culture of peace should be given tangible and objective form. The conduct of States, as expressed verbally through their representatives and in writing through official communiqués, must be seen as inextricably linked to established domestic criteria and to their actions vis-à-vis the outside world.

If States are to enjoy credibility within the international community, they must demonstrate the existence of effective foundations and criteria that underlie the working of societies that are free and democratic and at peace with the outside world, respect for the principles and rules of international law, observance of treaties, education for peace and true good-neighbourliness.

Education in Peru is built upon those foundations and criteria, which guarantee a clear dedication to peace on the part of present and future generations. In Peru school textbooks contain no references to the fomenting of hate, violence or hostile attitudes. These are not just empty statements, but are principles embodied in Peru's official documents and in its agreements with neighbouring countries. This is precisely the type of education that can inculcate in peoples' minds the rejection of all types of violence.

Peru welcomes the work done by the Director-General of UNESCO, as set forth in his report for this year submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 51/101 of 12 December 1996. In so doing, and in taking note of the report, we wish to highlight the importance of generating appropriate discussions in order to lay the foundations for a draft international declaration and programme of action.

In this ongoing process of advancing universal peace, Peru understands and maintains its commitment to the commendable effort of UNESCO, which calls for the active participation of all its members.

Mr. Sepelev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): One of the most far-reaching of the world community's long-term tasks is to facilitate the transition from deep-rooted ideologies of violence and war to a culture of peace and democracy. In a short period of time, from the beginning of work on drafting the concept of the culture of peace at the Yamoussoukro Conference on Peace in the Minds of Men, which was sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to the beginning of the implementation of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme to achieve a culture of peace, the idea has received increasing international recognition.

This, however, is only a beginning. The dissemination of ideas and the installation of a culture of peace entail a complicated and lengthy process that will require real changes in people's thinking as well as in the operating principles of all public institutions. We are, after all, talking about creating in societies a concept of a world culture based on unity in diversity and on mankind as the sum total of national and ethnic communities, all equal in rights and opportunities. Ultimately, we must pool our efforts to build a world that excludes racial, national and religious intolerance.

Russia is among those States that are actively involved in implementing the Culture of Peace Programme. The formation of a new world outlook in our country's younger generation, in the spirit of a culture of peace, is being fostered through the various chairs established by UNESCO in Russian educational institutions, associated schools and various scientific and educational centres that deal with problems of human rights, democracy and peace. I would mention the programme known as "Young People for a Culture of Peace and Democracy" at the Youth Institute. Work is also under way to create a national coordinating centre to ensure the success of the initiatives being undertaken in Russia under the aegis of the UNESCO International Consultative Committee.

In the context of those ongoing efforts in Russia, we are planning to make military training more humane. To that end we are planning, with the help of UNESCO, to include Russian military and civilian institutions in the network of cooperation between academic centres studying the non-military aspects of peace and security and analysing sources and methods of conflict- prevention and the role of the army in a democratic society.

The UNESCO Culture of Peace Chairs created at the Russian State Humanitarian University, the Zhukov Military Engineering Academy and a number of other

centres of higher learning act as support structures in these endeavours. As part of the Culture of Peace Programme, we are planning to hold a major international conference in Moscow on the theme "From stereotypes of war to ideals of peace through culture and education". We favour making the Culture of Peace Programme more concrete and down to earth. We need greater consistency and realism and a more action-oriented approach, not merely intellectual and theoretical subtleties.

Less than a decade into the UNESCO Programme, a great deal has been accomplished. However, there is still much to do. The implementation of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme could help to implement the great humane ideals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Doudech (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): The Tunisian delegation, which is a sponsor of draft resolution A/52/L.4 on agenda item 156, "Towards a culture of peace", would like to reaffirm its unswerving support for all initiatives designed to promote world peace. The strengthening of the culture of peace must be at the heart of the efforts of the United Nations to save humankind from conflicts and their devastating effects. The culture of peace is quite rightly a fundamental means of preventing conflicts.

To this end, the values of tolerance, dialogue, human rights and democracy must be the pillars of any effort aimed at creating the necessary conditions for peace. In this framework, the international human rights conventions, as well as the plans of action adopted in the framework of the different international conferences organized by the United Nations, are essential instruments in the promotion of the culture of peace.

The principles contained in the United Nations Charter also represent fundamental points of reference in this regard. It goes without saying that any activity in this framework should be propelled by education and the broadest possible dissemination of the ideals of peace. In this context, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the efforts being made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which has continued to play an active and constructive role in promoting the culture of peace.

By encouraging cultural rapprochement among peoples and the development of mechanisms for international cooperation on cultural issues, that organization is making an essential contribution to world peace. In general, cultural activities must take place within the framework of the cause of peace and work for its preservation and development. It is on the basis of these principles and these considerations that Tunisia has been enshrined as a cultural capital in 1997.

The numerous varied cultural activities held throughout this year in Tunisia have taken place in the context of promoting a spirit of dialogue and tolerance and of bringing peoples closer together at the regional and international levels so as to contribute to promoting the culture of peace.

Lastly, we hope that the preparation of a draft United Nations declaration on a culture of peace will make it possible to strengthen the idea of making this issue a priority for the entire United Nations system.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): We are indebted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and to its Director-General, Mr. Federico Mayor, in particular, for having initiated international action to promote a culture of peace. My country is pleased at the welcome and support that the international community has given to this important initiative, which responds admirably to the aspirations for peace of all the peoples of the world.

The United Nations system has an important role to play in the realization of this noble goal. This is particularly true since the creation of the United Nations was itself an act of culture, intended, as the Charter proclaims, to save succeeding generations from war, which is to say, to create the necessary conditions for the establishment of universal peace.

Fifty-two years have passed since the end of the Second World War — a great tragedy, the atrocities of which have left indelible scars in the minds and on the bodies of the survivors, and which reminds us of the need we all feel today to renounce forever war in relations between individuals and between peoples.

For several decades the international community has been striving to redefine both the meaning and the nature of international relations, this time on the basis of equal sovereignty of States and recognition of the interdependence of nations.

The profound and rapid changes we are witnessing at the international level prompt us to think collectively

about the future of our peoples and the importance that should be given to dialogue and consultation in a world that, thanks to technological progress and massive international exchanges, has become a true global village.

UNESCO thus calls upon us to strive, in a new spirit of tolerance and interaction, to revitalize and give a new dimension to the great concept of the concert of nations, nations representing the peoples of the Earth and inspired by the same unshakeable will to give life its true meaning. That is really the point when we seek to banish violence in all its forms and to promote a culture of peace that can create the openness we need for the free expression of our philosophical, religious and political ideas and to allow each individual to help build his country.

Without this culture of peace, which must be anchored in the hearts and minds of the men and women of each of our countries, there can be no stability, progress, or development. Herein lies the importance of our meeting today. It is not intended to get us to agree on the content of a draft resolution and to vote in favour of it; rather, today provides us a solemn opportunity to proclaim our faith in the United Nations. In particular, it is an opportunity to renounce the use of violence for conflict resolution, because we know that any solution, to be lasting, must involve negotiation and the contributions of all the parties concerned in this process, which must inevitably lead to a solution that takes into account the feelings, opinions, viewpoints and interests of each and every one of us.

It is therefore essential that this culture of peace be promulgated here at United Nations. But it must also be promulgated in our respective countries, so that our peoples can be armed with this new instrument, which is the only one capable of saving them and our nations from the conflicts that have for so long ravaged entire nations throughout the world.

UNESCO thus calls upon us to work with it to define a new framework for action, by inspiring us with values we all hold dear — notably, respect for human rights and democracy and, above all, good governance, which, in the opinion of my delegation, is the crucible of all governmental action and the necessary instrument for ensuring the harmonious, beneficial development of all the citizens of our respective countries.

We must therefore strive to create the normative instruments that are essential to establishing the primacy of law over the use of force so as to ensure that every citizen in our countries enjoys the right and the necessary space to express his or her feelings and the free choice to be made in defining the future of his or her country.

Africans today in various regions of our continent who are facing new conflicts are part of this new adventure in which UNESCO invites us to participate. We agree with UNESCO that only social interaction, tolerance and respect for each other and for human rights can achieve the development of our respective countries. We agree with UNESCO that our peoples must understand that it is in inclusion, not exclusion, that the future of our nations lies. We are therefore called upon today not merely to reinforce the new idea being disseminated by UNESCO that each of us should contribute to building a new world through dialogue and the promotion of a culture of peace; but we must also, here and now, proclaim our total support for this new culture of peace, as stated in the draft resolution before us.

We believe that it is essential for us to lend our unanimous support to this draft resolution. It is just as important, however, that we make the necessary effort to ensure that, in each of our respective countries, each citizen understands the usefulness and importance of the culture of peace. In this way, we can renew our zeal in seeing to it that all our rancour, which has led to so much misunderstanding, and all this intolerance, which has led to so many conflicts in our respective countries, are finally banished through this new dialogue and this new culture that we have all decided to promulgate.

As I said, Africa is an active partner and we agree to contribute to this effort and to ensure that our respective peoples can flourish in a new context through dialogue, cooperation, respect for the individual and the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue, which alone can lead to this new space, particularly by means of this indispensable instrument for conciliating our respective nations and creating a strong and united nation.

The delegation of Guinea-Bissau has acted entirely in harmony with what has been asked of us. That is why we wished to be a sponsor of the draft resolution, which we deem to be important and hope will be a point of departure for a new concept and philosophy that will help to strengthen friendly relations of cooperation between the peoples that we represent and will constitute a new basis for friendly relations of social interaction among all peoples, particularly in the countries that we represent.

We therefore hope that this draft resolution, which was introduced early in the meeting by our colleague from Bangladesh, will be supported by the entire international community and adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I call on the representative of Luxembourg on a point of order.

Ms. Kirsch (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union attaches a great deal of importance to the subject of a culture of peace and the text that will result from today's debate. It is for that reason, as we told the sponsors of the text, that we would like to delay action on draft resolution A/52/L.4.

On this occasion, we wish to reaffirm our complete readiness to continue consultations with the sponsors in a positive and constructive spirit in order to allow the General Assembly to take a speedy decision on this draft.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): My delegation, along with 42 other cosponsors, was disappointed to listen to the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, proposing a deferment of action on draft resolution A/52/L.4.

We had a very good and full debate on the item on a culture of peace this morning. It contributed greatly to the enrichment of the ideas being shared by delegations on this subject. We thought that it would be possible for us to take action on the draft resolution this morning. The report on the subject has been out since 19 September, the draft resolution has been out since 16 October, and we had thought we could take a decision now.

However, we also value the importance of consensus on such an all-important issue. We would like everybody, all 185 Members of the United Nations, to join in a consensus to give strong support to this draft resolution on a culture of peace. So we would be patient; we would agree to the deferment proposed by Luxembourg; but we hope that it will not be a long deferment. We hope that, within a week, we should be able to work out a consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.4. And it is my hope and the hope of all 43 sponsors that we will make a minimum of changes to the draft resolution — maybe no changes — and that it will be possible for us come back next week to adopt this draft resolution, as contained in document A/52/L.4.

We hope, and would propose on behalf of 43 sponsors, that we can take action on this text at the earliest possible time, but not later than a week from Monday, which is 10 November.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Costa Rica on a point of order.

Mrs. Castro de Barish (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation was one of the sponsors of the request to include the item on a culture of peace as a separate item on this very important subject, as contained in document A/52/191 and adopted by the General Assembly last September without objection. Costa Rica was also one of the original 25 sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.4, introduced by the representative of Bangladesh, which, as he announced, now has 43 sponsors.

I wish to associate Costa Rica with the statements made by the representatives of El Salvador on behalf of Central America and of Paraguay on behalf of the Rio Group.

I am also discouraged to see that a proposal has been made to defer action on this draft resolution. It is difficult to understand the reason for this, because, as our colleague from Bangladesh also said, the important report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, contained in document A/52/292, is dated 19 September 1997 and has been available for over a month. Our draft resolution came out in all the working languages two weeks ago on 16 October 1997.

Nonetheless, in spite of our certainty that our draft resolution (A/52/L.4) could be adopted today with broad support from the General Assembly, we will heed the considerations of our colleague from Bangladesh, who says that one must be patient — which is sometimes very difficult to do — and postpone the adoption of the draft resolution in order to achieve the consensus called for by the idea of replacing the culture of war with the culture of peace, for the benefit of all humanity and in fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Swaziland on a point of order.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation did not intend to take the floor because we are of the opinion that an item such as this one on the culture of peace would be an issue that is so delicate that every delegation would give it priority. Having heard that there is a request to move slowly on this item, my delegation would like to make it clear that it feels uncomfortable.

If I may ask a question: What is peace, and how delicate is it? If peace is an expensive commodity in any society, it therefore becomes imperative that we move fast, in order to create a culture that would build and cement peace to avoid the wars that are visible in a number of spots in different continents.

As members of this Assembly, we are expected to move very swiftly in order to develop this culture. The intent was first made known during the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights this year in Geneva. I therefore humbly implore the President and those delegations that are seeking the postponement to stipulate the time when we can conclude this issue.

Generality never does justice, especially to those of us who are from troubled spots or regions where nothing can substitute for the desire for peace and the culture of peace.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on a point of order.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation has heard the opinion expressed by the European Union on the one hand, and the various viewpoints expressed by the various sponsors of the draft resolution (A/52/L.4), on the other. My delegation — like many others, I am sure — hopes that any amendments proposed to the draft resolution should be minimal, as we fully support the draft. After all, it is sponsored by 42 Member States.

The Acting President: In view of the statements just made, action on draft resolution A/52/L.4 will be taken at a later date to be announced.

I call on the representative of Swaziland on a point of order.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation does not intend to cause any impediments to the decisions that you are taking, but I must say that it is not clear to my delegation. It would seem we are hedging. I would appeal to the Acting President to be precise. When exactly are we supposed to take action and a decision on this one?

I have indicated that a culture of peace is not substitutable. I therefore do not think that we will be doing justice to any draft resolution that seeks to drive towards that end.

May I humbly request that the Acting President make it clear when we are going to take action: this afternoon or on Monday? Let us be precise on this one. Then the support of my delegation will be received.

The Acting President: Bangladesh, as a sponsor, indicated that the sponsors were expecting action on the draft resolution to be taken by 10 November.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Peled-Flax (Israel): I wish to exercise my delegation's right of reply to the very lengthy remarks made this morning by the Syrian representative.

It is indeed unfortunate that as we gathered here this morning to discuss the report (A/52/292) of the Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regarding educational activities under the project "Towards a culture of peace" and the accompanying draft resolution (A/52/L.4), we should have been subjected to a tirade replete with all the worn-out arguments of years gone by on the part of Syria. This item is one around which there exists considerable international consensus, and the attempt by Syria to exploit this forum in order to engage in the needless politicization of this matter does not redound to its credit.

I wish to reiterate Israel's position, as set out by our Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and call upon Syria to return to the negotiating table so that the peace which both the peoples of Israel and Syria desire and deserve can be achieved. Belligerent pronouncements and bellicose statements in international forums are not the way to achieve peace, nor to engender its culture.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): When my delegation spoke of a culture of peace we dotted the i's and crossed the t's. We clearly spelt out precisely what a culture of peace ought to be. We said that a culture of peace must be built on the foundations of international law, the resolutions of the United Nations, the United Nations Charter and humanitarian law. Where is the error there, I ask.

We further said that a culture of peace means banishing the roots of a culture of war, and in that context we made it clear that foreign occupation is one of the principal causes of war.

I have just heard the statement by the representative of the Israeli occupiers. I was astonished by the arrogance with which he set out his views. Are those who defend the freedom of their land and of their people truly deviating from the culture of peace? If a culture of peace does not mean the end of foreign occupation, what does it mean? If a culture of peace does not mean respect for the rights of others, what does it mean?

Under Israel's occupation of Arab lands, the Syrian Arab, Palestinian Arab and Lebanese Arab peoples are without their minimal, basic human rights: Israeli soldiers of occupation strip away every shred of their dignity, their culture and their mastery over their own destiny.

Syria, which has sought peace and whose positions led to the convening of the Madrid peace conference, has always stated its willingness to continue the peace process from where it left off, on the basis of the formula of land for peace and of respect for United Nations resolutions for peace. Where is the error there?

Syria is prepared to resume peace talks when and if Israel proves its readiness to respect the principles of the United Nations and the foundations of peace. That is a firm strategic policy of the Syrian Arab Republic on the issue of peace.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 123 and 159 and the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 133.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that:

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee unless the Assembly is notified otherwise.

Agenda items 123 and 159

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/547)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report, which for the time being may be found in document A/C.5/52/L.6.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/8).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 123 and 159.

Agenda item 133

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/543)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 133.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work. The continuation of the election of members of the Economic and Social Council will take place on Monday, 3 November, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.